

NAVIGATOR KNOWS & ULTIMATE ADVENTURES

Expedition yachting, as it is referred to in the yachting industry, has rapidly become the next frontier in luxury travel. As more and more owners succumb to the lure of adventure travel, *Navigator's* Miriam Cain talks to experts in the field about the rising demand to venture off the beaten track aboard explorer yachts.




THE EXPERTS**8 Ben Lyons****CEO, EYOS Expeditions**

Ben has spent his life captivated by ships and travel. Ben brings a combination of his knowledge as a captain and his business sense from his MBA to EYOS, helping to design once-in-a-lifetime experiences and guiding clients in safety and luxury to some of the world's most remote cruising grounds.

**1 Jimmy Carroll****Co-Founder, Pelorus**

Jimmy Carroll knows yachts, having previously worked as Head of Marketing for Winch Design. Jimmy brings his knowledge of yachts and his experience as a mountain leader, advanced diver, and eight years' service with the British Army reconnaissance regiment to Pelorus, helping to design individual itineraries according to the client's brief and deliver extraordinary experiences.

**11 Nicolas Fry****Charter Manager,
Northrop & Johnson**

Nicolas brings his knowledge and his experience as a captain and charter yacht manager to Northrop & Johnson, where he manages a large fleet of classic and modern yachts.

Why do you think that exploration yachting has seen an increase in demand in recent years?

8 There is overall a trend toward experiences versus objects – the idea that an incredible wildlife encounter shared with your family is worth more than any object you can purchase. In a world where we are bombarded with a constant demand for our attention, there is something restorative about returning to a more natural environment – it is a reset of sorts for our clients.

11 At this level of the market, clients are always looking for the rare and the remote. They want to explore destinations that no one else has been to, and see wildlife, people and environments that are hard to access. We are responding to this and putting together creative, innovative and safe experiences in these out-of-the-way regions that leave a light footprint, but long memories.

11 There is a shift taking place in yachting: people are now fully aware that a yacht really is the best possible way to explore the remote parts of the world. Exploring doesn't need to be uncomfortable. It's genuine exploration, but with a level of comfort on the same par as the Mediterranean or the Caribbean.

Why now? What has spiked the interest from clients to venture farther afield than the gold triangle of the Caribbean, Côte d'Azur and Amalfi Coast?

8 One reason is simply that there is more hardware available now to enjoy these experiences farther afield. A few adventurous owners have sent their yachts to more remote locations, which creates new opportunities for charter and raises awareness of a destination that many wouldn't have considered before. And, word of mouth is playing a significant role, as is climate change – people want to gain a better understanding and see firsthand what is happening in the poles.

11 The improvement in digital communication means clients are now able to spend longer on board and use their yachts as a platform to explore. Demand for more remote regions is building with a younger generation of clients who are challenging the norm. They don't want to settle with the same format, cruising the same crowded areas year-in-year-out.

Do you believe that shipyards and brokers have created the demand or have they simply reacted to clients' demands?

11 We feel that they are reacting to the clients' demands, particularly yacht owners, who are looking for a return on experience from their yacht. The clients are challenging the yachting industry and this comes from radical new designs like EXCELLENCE VI or explorer vessels like ANDROMEDA and REV. Brokers are partnering with companies like ours to offer more to their clients and show

that they work with the best people in the industry who fully understand how to deliver amazing experiences.

Why do you believe a luxury yacht is the best means to explore the world?

B A yacht simply delivers what a client wants in a way that no other vessel can. It allows for a completely custom experience. You can operate according to your own timetable, completely separate from any other infrastructure or support. And, that yacht is mobile, of course, so you can take this incredible platform anywhere in the world.

Do you believe you need a specifically built or adapted yacht to explore remote locations?

B We work with a variety of yachts of different capabilities. We have taken many conventional yachts to remote regions of the world – it isn't necessarily that you need a custom designed yacht to go on an expedition. However, the

capabilities of the yacht will ultimately determine what you can do on the expedition and what kind of experience you can have. Last summer, I was in Antarctica onboard an ice-classed yacht. We spent 48 hours deep in the ice, faraway from any other ship and it was just magical. A conventional yacht would not have been able to deliver the same level of experience.

J Ideally the yacht would have assets for exploration onboard, but this is definitely not a barrier to entry. One of things that we do best is combine clever planning and logistics to ensure that we can take clients as remote as possible. This can mean anything from renting helicopters or low-draft skiffs (where possible) or traveling with an ice-breaker to visit the polar regions.

N An expedition yacht is a versatile vessel that has the ability to cruise self-sufficiently for long periods of time. Designed and built with power, stability and efficiency



foremost in mind, with the addition of a displacement hull, they are the safest charter yachts available for long-range cruising.

To the adventurous client, what value do you add?

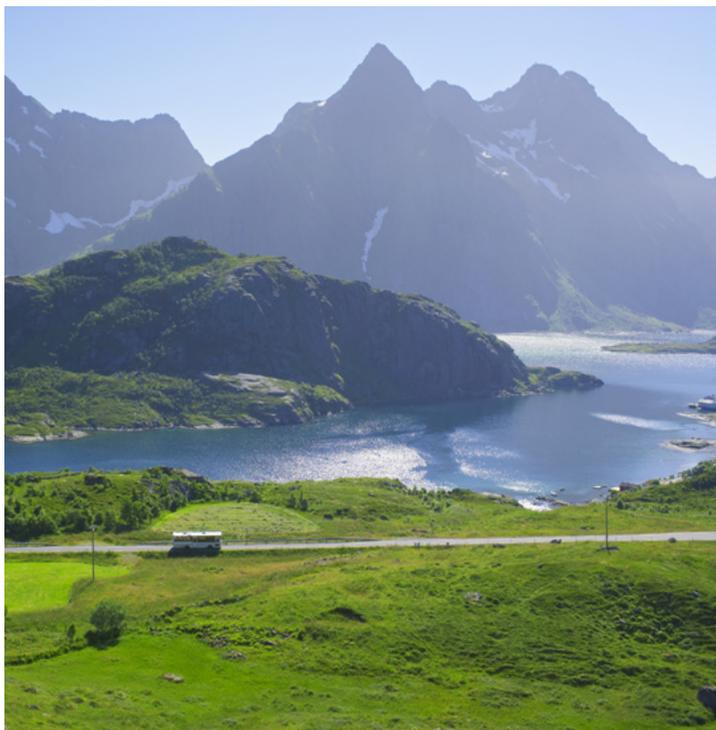
1 Experience and safety. Access is a big advantage of our network and having the knowledge to be able to execute a plan B flawlessly at a moment's notice. Our strong shoreside team means we have the infrastructure to support an expedition from inception to execution. We also place a premium on responsible operations. Clients can be assured we will follow the highest standards in every operation and we never lose sight that our primary mission is to deliver a safe, well-run expedition, every time. We can help bring the destination alive to the client while removing a significant portion of the risk and worry that goes with operating in a remote environment.

2 We bring clever planning and a network of contacts

from all corners of the globe – often from outside the travel industry – who have a wealth of knowledge and insight, be that in conservation, marine biology, anthropology or wildlife spotting. We also work closely with their captains and have a great master mariner and ice pilots who seamlessly support them in delivering a smooth service to our clients. We use a military planning tool to create every one of our trips, so that every “T” is crossed, and “I” dotted. We are rigorous about risk assessment and can build in security and contingency for every eventuality.

3 At Northrop & Johnson we work closely with expedition agencies like EYOS and Pelorus in order to design these experiential cruising routes, in collaboration with the captains in our fleet, whose knowledge of their own yacht is also vital to the creative process. Experts in their field, they are our eyes on the ground and help to ensure an absolutely seamless service for each and every client, keeping all logistical issues away from the guests.





01
OCEANCO'S 345ft (105m) diesel electric driven Esquel project has been conceived and designed to explore new territories

Which remote areas are becoming more popular?

- ① We see endless possibilities for adventure in The Kimberley, Raja Ampat and Papua New Guinea, as well as closer to home, in Norway, Scotland and the Baltics. Patagonia and South America have much to offer as well.
- ② There are an array of remote cruising grounds to explore, from the South Pacific to Costa Rica, Alaska to Antarctica, but two areas that seem to have increased in popularity in the past 12 to 24 months are Arctic Svalbard and Greenland and French Polynesia.

Where next?

- ① We have just returned from reconnoitring Eritrea – it is pristine, safe and has some of the best diving we have ever seen. It is the perfect pitstop for yachts traveling in and out of the Mediterranean each season. While scouting, we negotiated with seven different ministerial departments to unlock this amazing country and get access to incredible experiences both at sea and on land.

What efforts do you make to ensure that the environments in which you operate are protected?

- ③ First and foremost, EYOS are members of both IAATO (International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators) and AECO (Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators), which quite literally set the standards for operations in pristine regions. Our team sits on the

Executive Committee for both organizations, and we have actively contributed to and even written many of the standards that are now followed by a wide variety of vessels. We also have quietly arranged opportunities for scientists or conservation organizations to have use of our clients' yachts, and we have supported several media and scientific expeditions, including the extraordinary Five Deeps Expedition, where we were literally learning something new about the ocean on each dive. Of course, we encourage carbon offset for all our expeditions, and have worked with clients to arrange donations and support to local organizations that support conservation. We also just recently assisted with the organization of an Ocean Plastics Summit, which gathered at sea over 160 stakeholders over a four-day period to advance solutions.

What are your top 10 explorer yachts?

- ③ HANSE EXPLORER, LEGEND, ARCTIC P, NAIA, GAME CHANGER, SEAWOLF, SURI, REV, PLANET 9, ALUCIA and ROSEHEARTY
- ④ ANDROMEDA, LEGEND, SAVANNAH, DUNIA BARU, SURI, CLOUDBREAK, TWIZZLE, GALILEO G, SHERAKHAN and PLANET NINE
- ⑤ LUNA, DRUMBEAT, SEAWOLF, LE GRAND BLEU, ICE LADY, OCTOPUS, STEEL, LATITUDE (52m Hitzler Werft), LEGEND and STORM



And finally, which is your favorite yacht?

B My favorite yacht has to be the SeaXplorer. I am a bit biased, of course, in that EYOS was a design partner with Damen shipyards in designing the SeaXplorer range. We contributed over 150 design criteria and spent months working with the shipyard's team to deliver the most capable and robust luxury yacht available.

A ANDROMEDA is amazing as she challenges the conventional – from her design to being built in a commercial yard – she is taken all over the world and is true to her explorer spirit.

N Delivered in November 2018, the 236ft (72m) SOLO was designed with long-range cruising in mind and has a range of 6,000 nautical miles. Features include an oversized beach club complete with a gym and spa facilities, a touch-and-go helipad, many water toys and a crew of specialists: personal trainer, masseuse, yoga teacher, kite surf instructor, dive master... the list goes on. ●

